



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 18, 2003

### TOPEKA, KANSAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THREE TOPEKA BANK ROBBERIES

TOPEKA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Larry D. Merriweather**, 22, Topeka, Kansas, entered a guilty plea today before U.S. District Judge Julie A. Robinson to **three counts of bank robbery, two counts of brandishing a firearm during a bank robbery, and one count of discharging a firearm during a bank robbery.**

Melgren said that Merriweather admitted at his plea that on June 20, 2002, he entered the Capital City Bank, 2825 SE California, Topeka, Kansas, brandished a handgun and robbed the bank of an undisclosed amount of cash. Merriweather also admitted that on August 28, 2002, he again entered the Capital City Bank, 2825 SE California, Topeka, and robbed the bank of an undisclosed amount of cash. Merriweather further admitted that on October 24, 2002, he entered the Lyndon State Bank, 1535 SW Fairlawn Road, Topeka, brandished a firearm, stole a second firearm from the bank's security guard, robbed the bank of an undisclosed amount of cash and, while attempting to escape, shot and seriously injured the security guard.

Merriweather faces a maximum of twenty-five years in federal prison, without parole for bank robbery, a minimum of seven years for the first count of brandishing a firearm during a bank robbery, and a minimum of twenty-five years for brandishing and discharging firearm during a bank robbery. Sentencing is set for November 24, 2003, at 9:00 a.m.

**Co-defendant Lamanzo Searcy**, 30, Topeka, Kansas was sentenced on June 16, 2003, to eleven years and nine months in federal prison, without parole, to be followed by six years of supervised release. Searcy entered a guilty plea on March 21, 2003, to one count of robbing the Capital City Bank on June 20, 2002, and one count of brandishing a firearm during the bank robbery.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the Topeka Police Department and FBI in this investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Mattivi in this prosecution.

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“Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, a national initiative to reduce gun violence, prosecuting criminals who terrorize innocent members of our community is a top priority of the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Topeka Police Department, and the FBI,” Melgren said. “Those who choose to commit these violent gun crimes will spend a very long time in federal prison.”

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